



News Release

For Immediate Release
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Mrs. Huntsman Honors Healthy Worksites

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Mrs. Mary Kaye Huntsman, Utah's First Lady, and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) today honored 23 of Utah's state and local government agencies for outstanding efforts in promoting wellness at their worksites. Agencies receiving the Healthy Utah Awards have helped implement healthy changes at their worksite, including changes in the environment and employee behavior.

Each of the agencies recognized has established a wellness council, a group of employees who dedicate an hour each month to improving the health of their worksite. Councils work on projects such as offering on-site healthy food options, having tobacco cessation and stress management programs available and sponsoring classes to improve employee health. "Each of these agencies deserves a standing ovation for their efforts," said Kathy Paras, Healthy Utah Program Manager. "Implementing a worksite health promotion program shows commitment to employees' health and well-being."

Such a program was implemented seven years ago at the UDOH in Salt Lake City. "We set up a wellness committee with the help of Healthy Utah. We surveyed our employees to find out what they needed, then tailored our efforts to meet those needs," said Cassandra Fairclough, Health Program Specialist with the UDOH. "We implemented a program to improve fruit and vegetable consumption and increase physical activity. Nearly half of our employees participated. As a result, more than 90 percent of participants were getting at least 30 minutes of exercise and eating five fruits and vegetables per day."

Other agencies have seen similar success. "Our wellness program has been running for nearly two years," said Gerri Walker, Accounting Technician for the Mountainlands Association of Governments (AOG). "Our efforts have helped to create an environment that makes it easy for

employees to make healthy choices. We have several group wellness activities throughout the year, and we distribute a monthly newsletter with safety, health and wellness tips.”

Mountainlands AOG and UDOH are two of this year’s Healthy Utah Award recipients.

The most prestigious award given is the Governor’s Work Well Award. “This is what we hope all agencies strive for,” said Paras. “Implementation of a comprehensive, long-term health promotion program allows agencies to see changes in health care costs, productivity and the overall health of their employees.” Criteria for the Governor’s Work Well Award include helping employees eat better and promoting physical activity among workers.

Healthy Utah, the Public Employees Health Program’s (PEHP) worksite wellness program, sponsors the awards. Mrs. Huntsman presented the awards today at a special luncheon held during a training for wellness councils at the Old Mill Golf Course in Salt Lake City. For additional information about Healthy Utah Awards contact Kathy Paras at (801) 538-6242.

2006 Healthy Utah Award Recipients

Governor’s Work Well Award

Utah Department of Health, Cannon Health Building Wellness Council

Outstanding Program Awards

Mountainlands Association of Governments Wellness Council

Utah Department of Workforce Services – Logan Office Wellness Council

Outstanding Policy Award

Price City Wellness Council

Outstanding Environment Awards

Central Utah Water Conservancy Wellness Council

Utah Department of Health, 44 Medical Wellness Council

Commitment to Wellness Awards

Cache County

Central Utah Water

Courts – 8th District

Davis Applied Technology Center

Eagle Mountain City

Ephraim City

Mountainlands Association of Governments

Payson City

Price City

Utah Department of Administrative Services – Fleet Operations

Utah Department of Corrections – Administration

Utah Department of Corrections – Gunnison

Utah Department of Health – 44 Medical Triangle

Utah Department of Health – Cannon Health Building

Utah Department of Human Services – Blanding

Utah Department of Human Services – Murray

Utah Department of Human Services – North Temple

Utah Department of Transportation – Rampton Complex

Utah Department of Workforce Services – Logan

Utah Department of Workforce Services – Provo

Utah Department of Workforce Services – Vernal

Wasatch County

Wasatch Front Regional Council

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.